

In the Claims:

Amend the claims as follows:

1           1. (currently amended)   [[A]] An inconspicuous semi-permanent hearing device  
2 ~~adapted to be inserted entirely within a wearer's ear canal past the aperture thereof for long-~~  
3 ~~term use therein~~, comprising:

4           a sealing retainer adapted to be ~~seated~~ retained in the bony portion of ~~the~~ a wearer's  
5 ear canal along the longitudinal axis and in direct contact with the walls thereof when said  
6 hearing device is fully ~~inserted~~ seated within the ear canal of the wearer;

7           a receiver assembly including a receiver for supplying acoustic signals processed by  
8 said hearing device to the tympanic membrane of the wearer, said receiver assembly being  
9 arranged and adapted to mate with said sealing retainer for positioning in the bony portion of  
10 the ear canal;

11           a microphone assembly adapted to be positioned medially past the aperture of the ear  
12 canal, said microphone assembly including a microphone for receiving incoming acoustic  
13 signals for processing by said hearing device;

14           a battery assembly including a battery for powering said hearing device; and

15           a flexible connector electrically and mechanically connecting said battery assembly  
16 [[,]] to said receiver assembly and said microphone assembly; ~~so that said microphone~~  
17 ~~assembly is flexibly supported in the cartilaginous portion of the ear canal to be substantially~~  
18 ~~non-occluding therein with minimal or no contact with the walls thereof, whereby to avoid~~  
19 ~~substantial interference by said microphone assembly with hair and production of cerumen~~  
20 ~~and debris within said ear canal~~

21           whereby said hearing device is adapted to be inserted entirely within a wearer's ear  
22 canal medially past the aperture thereof for long-term wear therein.

2. (canceled)

1           3. (currently amended) The inconspicuous semi-permanent hearing device of claim  
2 1, wherein said sealing retainer is sufficiently soft and yielding to conform itself to the shape  
3 of the ear canal in said bony portion for long-term retention ~~in a seated position~~ therein when  
4 said hearing device is fully ~~inserted into~~ seated in the ear canal.

1           4. (currently amended) The inconspicuous semi-permanent hearing device of claim  
2 1, ~~wherein~~ further comprising an air gap between said sealing retainer ~~includes a cavity to~~  
3 ~~accept and~~ said receiver assembly ~~in mating relationship therewith~~.

**5-36** (canceled)

1           37. (currently amended) The inconspicuous semi-permanent hearing device of claim  
2 3, wherein said sealing retainer is composed of a compressible material from a group  
3 including polyurethane foam, silicone, or like material.

**38-44** (canceled)

1           45. (currently amended) The inconspicuous semi-permanent hearing device of claim  
2 1, wherein said sealing retainer is ~~one among~~ provided in an assortment of ~~sealing retainers of~~  
3 different sizes and shapes ~~supplied with said hearing device~~ to accommodate the dimensions  
4 of the ear canal of the individual wearer.

**46-48** (canceled)

1           49. (currently amended) The inconspicuous semi-permanent hearing device of claim  
2 1, wherein said receiver assembly ~~protrudes~~ is adapted to protrude medially beyond the  
3 contact area of said sealing retainer when said device is seated in the ear canal.

**50-97** (canceled)

1           **98.** (currently amended) A semi-permanent hearing device adapted ~~to be inserted~~  
2 ~~entirely within a wearer's ear canal past the aperture thereof~~ for insertion and long-term use  
3 ~~therein~~ wear in the ear canal, comprising:

4           a core assembly comprising  
5           transducer means for converting sound waves incident thereon to audible  
6 acoustic signals ~~for imparting thereof~~ to be imparted on the tympanic membrane of the  
7 wearer, and

8           a battery for powering said core assembly; and  
9           a sealing retainer fabricated and adapted to seat within and occlude the bony region of  
10 the ear canal ~~when said device is fully inserted within the ear canal of the wearer, said sealing~~  
11 ~~retainer including means for~~ and to snugly supporting support said core assembly along the  
12 longitudinal axis of the ear canal in said bony region when the hearing device is fully seated  
13 in the ear canal, whereby said sealing retainer provides acoustic sealing of said bony region of  
14 the ear canal to prevent feedback,

15           said core assembly including ~~an extended~~ a portion extending adapted to extend  
16 laterally and non-occludingly ~~into the cartilaginous region of~~ within the ear canal with  
17 ~~minimal or no contact of the ear canal wall therein, whereby to substantially avoid~~  
18 ~~interference by said extended portion of said core assembly with hair and production of~~  
19 ~~cerumen and debris in said cartilaginous region~~ medially past the aperture thereof when the  
20 hearing device is fully seated in the ear canal.

1           **99.** (currently amended) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein  
2 said core assembly and said sealing retainer are selectively separable from one another ~~for~~  
3 ~~disposal of said sealing retainer.~~

1           **100.** (original) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein said sealing  
2 retainer is sufficiently soft and yielding to conform itself to the shape of the ear canal in said

3 bony region for long-term retention in a seated position therein when said device is fully  
4 inserted into the ear canal.

1       **101.** (currently amended) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein  
2 further comprising an air gap between said sealing retainer ~~comprises an air cavity to accept~~  
3 and said core assembly ~~for snug support thereof~~.

1       **102.** (original) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, further comprising  
2 moisture-proof encapsulation of said device.

1       **103.** (original) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **102**, wherein said  
2 encapsulation has a wall thickness not exceeding 0.3 mm.

1       **104.** (original) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein said  
2 transducer means includes a microphone and a receiver each having a respective port for  
3 passage of acoustic signal therethrough, and further including at least one debris guard for at  
4 least one of said microphone port and said receiver port without substantial interference to  
5 passage of acoustic signal through the respective port.

1       **105.** (currently amended) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **104**, wherein  
2 said at least one debris guard is ~~moisture~~ waterproof.

**106-110** (canceled)

1       **111.** (original) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein said core  
2 assembly comprises an air vent.

**112-113** (canceled)

1           **114.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, including  
2 programming means for selectively adjusting electroacoustic parameters of said device.

1           **115.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **114**, wherein said  
2 programming means includes a programmer external to said device and adjustment means  
3 internal to said device responsive to programming signals from said programmer for  
4 performing said selective adjustment.

1           **116.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **100**, wherein said  
2 sealing retainer is composed of a compressible material.

1           **117.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **116**, wherein said  
2 compressible material is responsive to compression thereof to undergo delayed expansion  
3 over time to assume a snug fit within said ear canal.

1           **118.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein said sealing  
2 retainer is made of polyurethane foam or like material.

1           **119.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein said sealing  
2 retainer is made of silicone or like material.

1           **120.** (currently amended)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein  
2 said sealing retainer is removable from said device ~~and disposable for replacement thereof~~.

1           **121.** (original)   The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein said sealing  
2 retainer is one among an assortment of sealing retainers of different sizes and shapes supplied  
3 with said hearing device to accommodate the dimensions of the ear canal of the individual  
4 wearer.

**122** (canceled)

1           **123.** (currently amended) The semi-permanent hearing device of claim **98**, wherein  
2   said transducer means comprises a receiver assembly protruding medially beyond the contact  
3   area of said sealing retainer.

**124-140** (canceled)